

How to Choose Kitchen Countertops: Best Fits

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Installing new countertops is a major sign that your kitchen remodel is almost complete. From natural stone to engineered stone and many other countertop materials, you will have plenty of options to evaluate before making your final decision. This guide will fill you in on what your top countertop options are and provides information about the positive aspects, negative aspects and cost of each option.

How to Choose Kitchen Countertops: Finding the Right Material

Choosing kitchen countertops is not a process that should be rushed. Because the surfaces will remain in your home for many years, you will want to choose something that will satisfy you long term. From natural materials to engineered surfaces, the following are your best countertop choices.

Granite Countertops

[Granite](#) is one of the overall best materials you can find for countertops. These natural stone countertops are known for being beautiful, durable and low maintenance. Granite slabs can be found in a variety of colors, many of which include gorgeous veining. The material is heat resistant, stain resistant and scratch resistant. Granite countertops are easy to clean and do not require re-sealing as often as many other materials. If you are looking for an ideal countertop surface (or backsplash, kitchen island top, etc.), there are many reasons for granite to be at the top of your wish list.

Average Cost: Between \$32 to \$75 per square foot

Granite

Positives	Negatives
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Many colors and styles to choose from	Rare types can be pricey
Durable	
Resistant to heat, stains and scratches	
Easy to care for	

Marble Countertops

[Marble countertops](#) have long been adored by homeowners. If you are looking to incorporate natural beauty into your home, these surfaces can help you accomplish just that. As with granite, marble will offer you many countertop colors to choose from. While you will have to be careful with acidic spills (coffee, tea, soda, wine, etc.), as long as you are careful and keep up on cleaning and re-sealing, your marble countertops will look amazing for years.

Average Cost: \$40 to \$100 per square foot

Marble

Positives	Negatives
Natural beauty	Prone to stains from acidic substances
Many colors and styles to choose from	Rare types can be expensive
Durable	

Quartzite Countertops

For homeowners who enjoy the appearance of marble but want the toughness of granite, [quartzite countertops](#) are an excellent choice. The surfaces can be found in various colors and styles and is very durable. If these qualities appeal to you, quartzite may be just the material you are looking for.

Average Cost: Between \$60 to \$120 per square foot

Quartzite

Positives	Negatives
Beautiful	High-end types can be expensive
Durable	Some types can require re-sealing more often
Variety of color options	

Quartz Countertops

[Quartz countertops](#) are the best alternative to natural stone options. These surfaces are engineered by combining roughly 90 percent ground natural quartz with around 10 percent polyresin. The specific percentages will slightly vary based on specific brands (Caesarstone, Silestone, etc.). Because it is manufactured, quartz can be made to replicate the look of natural stone. It is available in many colors and styles. The material is durable, easy to clean and does not require sealing. One of the only downfalls is that you will have to be careful with heat around these surfaces. Excessive heat can cause the resin to melt, resulting in a permanent burn mark on your countertop.

Average Cost: Between \$50 to \$120 per square foot

Quartz

Positives	Negatives
Many colors and styles to choose from	Can be damaged by excessive heat
Durable	Rare types can be pricey
Easy to clean	
Does not require sealing	

Slate Countertops

[Slate countertops](#) are a fantastic choice if you are looking for a darker countertop surface that works well in a modern kitchen design. The natural stone can be found in a range of beautiful gray tones. Slate is also a very durable material and is resistant to heat and stains.

Average Cost: Between \$50 to \$200 per square foot

Slate

Positives	Negatives
Beautiful	Not many colors to choose from
Ideal for modern kitchens	Some types can be costly
Durable	
Heat and stain resistant	

Soapstone Countertops

Beautiful, durable and smooth to the touch are all words that can be used to describe [soapstone](#). This material is an excellent choice for your new kitchen countertops. Not only is it beautiful and low maintenance, but soapstone will naturally darken over time and develop a distinct patina. If you want to speed up the process, you can also treat your soapstone with mineral oil.

Average Cost: Between \$55 to \$100 per square foot

Soapstone

Positives	Negatives
Beautiful	Only available in greens and grays
Durable	Naturally darkens over time (may not appeal to some)
Smooth to the touch	
Naturally darkens over time	

Limestone Countertops

If you are looking for a countertop that will bring feelings of light and warmth to your space, [limestone countertops](#) will appeal to you. While you will need to be extremely cautious in the kitchen (because limestone is very porous), you can be rewarded by the natural stone's incredible beauty. You will need to re-seal more often than you would with many other natural stones, but the process is not complicated in any

way.

Average Cost: Between \$70 to \$200 per square foot

Limestone

Positives	Negatives
Beautiful	You must be very cautious
Brings feelings of light and warmth to the space	Requires re-sealing more often than some other stones

Travertine Countertops

[Travertine countertops](#) are very similar to limestone. Much of this is due to travertine being a type of limestone, although the two names should not be used interchangeably. Travertine and limestone do have distinct differences. This stone is known for its long streaks and consistent color.

Average Cost: Between \$45 to \$75 per square foot

Travertine

Positives	Negatives
High-quality appearance	You will need to be very careful
Long streaks and consistent color	Requires more frequent sealing than many other stones

Onyx Countertops

[Onyx countertops](#) are truly a stunning and exotic addition to any home. This natural stone is sure to become the focal point of any room you install it in. Because the stone is translucent, it can be backlit, which will further highlight its coloring.

Average Cost: Between \$75 to 250 per square foot

Onyx

Positives	Negatives
Incredible beauty	Needs more care than many other stones
Unique	Expensive
Can be backlit	

Glass Countertops

[Glass countertops](#) are another great alternative to natural stone. Not only are these surfaces pleasing to the eye, but they are also a very durable material. Glass is resistant to stains, scratches and heat – making it a terrific option for the kitchen. You will also not need to seal glass.

Average Cost: Between \$50 to \$70 per square foot

Glass

Positives	Negatives
Pleasing to the eye	Can show fingerprints, dust, etc.

Positives	Negatives
Great for modern kitchens	
Very durable	
Resistant to stains, scratches and heat	

Gemstone Countertops

Lastly, if you are looking for a truly breathtaking kitchen countertop, consider [gemstone](#). Found in many different colors and styles, this rare material will bring a stunning pop of color to your kitchen. Gemstone is also very durable.

Average Cost: Start around \$100 per square foot

Gemstone	
Positives	Negatives
One-of-a-kind material	Expensive
Can be found in different colors and styles	Require more care than many other materials
Durable	

What Are Some Other Kitchen Countertop Materials?

While the materials above are your best options for kitchen countertops, there are some other choices you can find. The alternatives are analyzed below.

Wood Countertops

Wood countertops are known to bring a warm feel to the kitchen. However, the surfaces are not the easiest to care for and can sustain damages.

Butcher Block Countertops

Butcher block is a similar material to wood. In fact, the material is made from strips of wood that are bonded together. These surfaces will require frequent care, including sanding and oiling.

Stainless Steel Countertops

Stainless steel countertops can be a great fit in a modern kitchen. On the flip side, the material is known for having a 'cold' look, can easily sustain various types of damages and is noisy to work on.

Laminate Countertops

Laminate, commonly called by the brand name Formica, is well regarded for being inexpensive. While there are many different styles you can choose from, you will ultimately not end up with the highest quality option for a countertop. Laminate countertops are prone to many types of damage and often cannot be repaired.

Solid Surface Countertops

Solid surface countertops (often associated with the brand name Corian) are another alternative to stone. While they can mimic the appearance, do not be fooled into thinking these surfaces can match the quality of stone. Not only can solid surface countertops sustain many types of damages, but these countertops are not cheap either.

Concrete Countertops

[Concrete countertops](#) are trendy. However, as with many other materials in this section, the surfaces can get sustain irreversible damages if you are not very careful around them.

Ceramic Tile Countertops

As with laminate countertops, ceramic tile countertops are often a common choice due to low cost. That said, you will need to put in some extra care with these surfaces, especially because of the grout lines you will have to deal with.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can You Install Your Own Countertops?

While some materials, like ceramic tile, can be a DIY job, you will generally need to hire a professional to install your new countertops (especially with stone). Many of the materials above are heavy and difficult to handle. Hiring a professional will significantly lower the risk of improper installation and ensure that you will not get hurt attempting to install the surface yourself.

How Can You Get a Good Countertop at a Low Cost?

There are several ways to find a high-quality option while keeping the cost low. The best way is to choose colors and styles that are common. For example, choosing a common type of white granite will be much less expensive than choosing a rare type of the stone that is blue.

Can You Put Hot Pots and/or Hot Pans on Your Countertop?

The answer to this question is that it will depend on which material you choose. Out of the ones described in this guide, granite is your best bet for a surface on which you can do this. However, while you can does not mean that you should. It is always a great idea to protect your kitchen countertop as much as possible by using trivets, hot pads, cutting boards, etc.

Regardless of which material you choose, you will want to carefully sort through all your available options before deciding on a new countertop. Reviewing the information in this guide can help you find a terrific new kitchen countertop that you can enjoy for years to come.